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Amendment to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:

storing data indicative of membership ~~in a first group~~ at a first client;

at a system host, transmitting a message to each of a plurality of clients including the said first client, the message including a header and a payload, the header including either a group identifier or a client identifier, the payload including ~~indicating whether it contains a group membership file including information indicative of client memberships in two or more groups for the group information file and whether it contains a client specific payload directed to a predetermined client~~ if the header is a group identifier, or a client specific payload associated with the client identifier if the header is a client identifier;

updating the data indicative of membership ~~in the first group~~ at the first client if the message contains a the group identifier and the group membership file includes with client memberships associated with the first client; and

processing the message at the first client if the message contains a client identifier associated with the first client

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~~the message contains a client specific payload and the first client is the predetermined client.~~

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the data indicative of membership ~~in the first group~~ comprises a first group identifier.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 2, further comprising:

creating a ~~the~~ first group including two or more member clients, a member client having a client identifier;

assigning the first group identifier to the first group;
and

associating the client identifiers of the member clients with the first group identifier in the group membership file.

4. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 3, wherein each member client satisfies a criterion.

5. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein the criterion comprises client profile information.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 2, further comprising:

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transmitting a message including a payload and a second group identifier;

receiving the message at the first client; and

extracting the payload from the message in response to the first group identifier matching the second group identifier.

7. (Currently Amended) An article comprising:

a machine-readable medium which stores machine-executable instructions, the instructions causing a machine to:

store data indicative of membership ~~in a first group~~ at a first client;

transmit a message to each of a plurality of clients including the first ~~said~~ client, the message including a header and a payload, the header including either a group identifier or a client identifier, the payload including a group membership file, the group membership file including information indicative of client memberships in two or more groups if the header is a group identifier, or a client specific payload associated with the client identifier if the header is a client identifier ~~indicating whether it contains a group membership file including information indicative of client memberships in two or more groups at a system host or whether it contains a client specific payload directed to a predetermined client;~~

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update the data indicative of membership ~~in the first group~~ at the first client if the message contains the group identifier and the a group membership file includes with client memberships associated with the first client; and

process the message at the first client if the message contains a client identifier and the client identifier is associated with the first client ~~specific payload and the client~~ ~~is the predetermined client.~~

8. (Currently Amended) The article of claim 7, wherein the data indicative of membership ~~in the first group~~ comprises a first group identifier.

9. (Currently Amended) The article of claim 8, further comprising instructions causing the machine to:

create a ~~the~~ first group including two or more member clients, a member client having a client identifier;
assign the first group identifier to the first group; and
associate the client identifiers of the member clients with the first group identifier in the group membership file.

10. (Previously Presented) The article of claim 9, wherein each member client satisfies a criterion.

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11. (Original) The article of claim 10, wherein the criterion comprises client profile information.

12. (Currently Amended) The article of claim 8, further comprising instructions causing the machine to:

transmit a message including a payload and a second group identifier;

receive the message at the first client; and

extract the payload from the message in response to the first group identifier matching the second group identifier.

13. (Currently Amended) An apparatus comprising:

a memory operative to store an apparatus identifier;

a receiver operative to receive a message including a header and a payload, the header including either a group identifier or a client identifier, the payload including a group membership file, the group membership file and two or more associated member identifiers if the header is a group identifier or a client specific payload associated with the client identifier if the header is a client identifier

~~indicating whether it contains a group membership file or a client specific payload directed to a predetermined client in a first transmission, said file including a group identifier and two or more associated member identifiers;~~

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a receiver controller operative to store the group identifier in the memory in response to message including a group identifier that and the said apparatus identifier matches one of the said member identifiers; and

a processor to process the client specific payload if the message includes a client identifier and the apparatus identifier matches the client identifier ~~is the predetermined client.~~

14. (Original) The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the group membership file comprises two or more group identifiers, a group identifier associated with two or more member identifiers.

15. (Original) The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the receiver controller is operative to identify each group identifier associated with a member identifier that matches the apparatus identifier, and to update the memory to include such identified group identifiers.

16. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the said updating comprises removing a stored group identifier in response to the said group identifier not being associated with the apparatus identifier in the group membership file.

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17. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 13, ~~wherein the receiver is operative to receive a message including an identifier and a payload portion, and~~

wherein the receiver controller is operative to ~~compare said identifier to the apparatus identifier and the stored group identifier and discard the said message in response to either of the group identifier or the client said identifier not matching one of the said apparatus identifier and said group identifier.~~

18. (Currently Amended) A system host comprising:

a memory for storing a group membership file and at least one client specific payload, the group membership file including two or more group identifiers, a group identifier associated with two or more member identifiers, the at least one client specific payload being directed to a predetermined client;

a group generator operative to create a first group including two or more first group member identifiers that share a first criterion and associate a group identifier with the two or more first group membership identifiers in the group membership file; and

a transmitter operative to transmit a message containing at least one of the group membership file and the at least one client specific payload to each of a plurality of client devices, two or more of the said client devices having client

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identifiers that match the first group member identifiers, and one of the said plurality of client devices being the predetermined client, the message including a header having either a group identifier associated with the group membership file or a client identifier associated with the predetermined client.

19. (Currently Amended) The system host of claim 18, further comprising:

a transmission controller operative to transmit the group membership file to the said plurality of client devices at scheduled intervals.

20. (Currently Amended) The system host of claim 19, wherein the group generator is operative to update the group membership file and transmit the updated group membership file to each of the plurality of client devices.

21. (Currently Amended) A system comprising:

a system host comprising:

a memory for storing a group membership file and at least one client specific payload, the group membership file including two or more group identifiers, each group identifier associated

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with two or more member identifiers, the client specific payload being directed to a predetermined client;

a group generator operative to create a first group including two or more first group membership identifiers that share a first criterion and associate a first group identifier with the two or more first group membership identifiers in the group membership file; and

a transmitter operative to transmit a message containing either a group identifier and an associated ~~at least one of the~~ group membership file, or a client identifier and an associated ~~and the~~ at least one client specific payload; and

a plurality of clients, each a client comprising:

a memory operative to store an apparatus identifier;

a receiver operative to receive the message in a first transmission and determine whether the message ~~it~~ contains a group membership file or a client specific payload; and

a receiver controller operative to store a group identifier in the memory in response to the ~~said~~ apparatus identifier matching one of said member identifiers; and

a processor to process a client specific payload if the message contains a client specific payload and the client is the predetermined client.

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22. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 21, wherein the ~~said~~ communication link comprises a transmission line.

23. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 21, wherein the ~~said~~ communication link comprises a wireless communication link.

24. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 21, wherein the ~~said~~ client devices comprise set-top appliances adapted for connection to a television.

25. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 21, wherein the ~~said~~ client devices comprise hand-held wireless communication devices.

26. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the group membership file includes a plurality of group membership identifiers associated with a plurality of client identifiers corresponding to a plurality of clients.